

***'Caring for Our Nation's Best'***  
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**Military Dental Care in Europe**

Heidelberg, Germany – Not sure about military dental care benefits in Europe? It's easy. Priority for dental care goes to insuring dental readiness of deploying and redeploying active duty Soldiers. Other than active duty beneficiaries are seen as often as possible and no emergencies are turned away.

The Europe Regional Dental Command (ERDC), headquartered in Heidelberg, operates 36 dental treatment facilities across Europe. Care is provided to military family members on a space available basis with the individual Soldier dental readiness the primary mission. Space in dental treatment facilities for other than active duty patients is dependent on the dental readiness needs of active duty Soldiers before and after deployments. Deployments of dental staffs may also be a factor in what care is available for the other than active duty beneficiary.

According to Col. Mike Cuenin, ERDC Commander, Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom have increased the operational tempo at dental treatment facilities in Europe making dental care less available for other than active duty beneficiaries.

"The space available for these patients is dependent upon the individual dental readiness of the active duty populations served by each dental treatment facility," he said, "so available services may vary from one location to another at any given time."

"I want our Soldiers and their families to understand that we will not open access to care at the expense of compromising the quality of dental care. The Soldiers and family members that we care for in Europe deserve a quality of care commensurate with or exceeding the society they have pledged to defend," he said. "Most host nation dentists accept the United Concordia (TRICARE) Dental Plan, and local military dental treatment facilities can provide patients information on this dental care alternative. Active duty Soldiers do not have this option."

Cuenin added that local dental treatment facility staffs can "show you how to care for your dental needs and maintain good dental hygiene, avoiding some unnecessary dental problems. The American Dental Association is also a good web site for this type information, <http://www.ada.org/public/index.asp>."

For more information about available dental care in your area contact your local military dental clinic.